

## AMUSEMENTS.

## Winter Garden.

The "star-system" has its uses and its abuses. An actor or actress who by diligent effort or through extraordinary natural gifts arrives at genuine artistic distinction, is justified in seeking better rewards and a wider fame than ordinary theatrical routine can afford. And it is manifestly to the interest of the drama that great talent should be hidden under no local bushel, but exhibited as freely and as universally as possible. The benefits which a real master of the stage may confer upon his profession, as well as upon the public, can be distributed in no way so well, all things considered, as by the "star-system." But its advantages only appear when upheld by supreme merit. Mediocrity, or even moderate cleverness, reverses all its conditions. In the hands of actors of average ability it is a serious injury. In the hands of bad actors, it simply brings ridicule and contempt upon the drama. It would require very little demonstration to show that in America the abuse of the "star-system" entirely outweighs its uses. There are perhaps half a dozen "stars" in the whole country who have fair title to the eminence they claim for themselves. The others are either actors of ordinary qualities, or are positively bad. The fact of their frequent popular successes is wholly unimportant, for to be led by the nose into every species of absurdity has long been one of the dearest joys of our theatrical public. Setting aside the half dozen worthy "stars," there remain a few hundreds, we believe, some of whom might fairly fulfill the duties of a regular stock engagement, and many of whom would not be tolerated in subordinate positions at a properly-organized theater.

Miss Avonia Jones, who on Monday evening appeared for the first time at the Winter Garden, is apparently of the moderately clever class. She has some personal advantages—a good voice, a good figure, and a countenance capable of certain strong expressions. It is proper to say, however, that the voice is not always judiciously employed; that a constant depression of the head, figures the effect of the figure, and that the countenance seems to reflect too persistently the same set of emotions, being very little else beside scornful and vindictive at any time. Such peculiar faults, in eminent artists, are apt to be passed unnoticed; but in a case where there are no striking merits to overbalance them, they are necessarily taken into account. Miss Jones's style of acting is that of gentle mediocrity. We do not wish to say that it is bad, but we certainly cannot call it good. Perhaps in a less somber character than that in which she made her debut, she might develop better qualities; but, judging from her first appearance, she lacks the positive attributes of dramatic distinction. That she should become a "star" is not much to be wondered at, since scores of ladies with qualifications far inferior have, within a few years, attempted the same experiment, and, in one sense, have succeeded. At the same time it is difficult to resist the critical inquiry—Why should Miss Avonia Jones be a "star"? Has she any quality which peculiarly distinguishes her from actresses holding what is called "stock" positions at other theaters? Is there any luster of originality in her, from which we may hope for something better and fresher than the cut-and-dried effects of ordinary "star" performances? Or, if original power be wanting, does she follow the old methods with more vigor, or earnestness, or brilliancy, or boldness, than we are accustomed to find among theatrical companies where "stars" do not twinkle? We sincerely think not. Her performance of the part of "Judith" showed simply good personal endowments, good taste, and a complete acquaintance with the business of the stage; but no superior talent in any degree.

The piece prepared for Miss Jones's debut—"Judith," the daughter of Merari—is tedious and ineffective. The audience on Monday night was greatly fatigued by it. A few strong "situations" are presented, but the processes by which they are arrived at are so wearisome, and sometimes so irrelevant, that they fail to interest. New and good scenery has been prepared by Messrs. Bartholomew and Wallace, and incidental music written by Mr. Robert Stoepel. These afford some relief to the dreariness of the play.

Miss Jones appears every evening this week.

## Olympic.

"The Irish Emigrant" and "The Laughing Hyena," constitute the nightly entertainments at this theater. In the former piece, Mr. Frank Drew personates the principal part. His grotesqueries excite continual mirth, but he exhibits none of the exquisite delicacy and tender feeling which so eminently distinguished the late Mr. John Drew in the same character. "Delicacy of every kind indeed appears to be very carefully considered by Mr. Frank Drew. He is often extremely funny, but he is also willing to win laughter and applause by methods which affront good taste. It is a pitiable thing to see an actor of good position and merit resorting to the cheapest and most vulgar effects of the stage. In "The Laughing Hyena," Mrs. John Wood has the honors. Her part is brief, but excellent in opportunities for the display of her most amusing qualities. Nothing could possibly be better than her acting in it, from beginning to end. The other characters are capably sustained by Mrs. Sedley Brown, Mr. Mortimer, and Mr. Davidge.

Next Monday evening "Loyalists" will be produced. This is a local adaptation, by Mr. Oakley Hall of Planché's "Fortunio."

## SERIOUS DISASTER IN PHILADELPHIA.

## Explosion of a Steam Boiler—Seven Persons Killed.

PHILADELPHIA, Wednesday, April 6, 1864. A large boiler at Merrick & Son's Southwark Foundry exploded this morning, causing much loss of life and great destruction of property.

PHILADELPHIA, Wednesday, April 6, 1864. Seven workmen were killed and over 30 wounded by the explosion at the Southwark Foundry.

The boiler-house was situated in the center of the buildings forming a hollow square. It contained two boilers, one of which exploded, and displacing the other so that operations on the works had to be suspended. Seven hundred men were temporarily thrown out of employment by the disaster.

The following are the names of the killed: Joseph Wiser, Daniel McLaughlin, Patrick Brennan, John Dougherty, Charles Webb, John McGowan, Edward Bannan.

Several others will probably die. Ten of the wounded are at the hospital, and the remainder at their homes.

The boiler was torn into two pieces, one portion of which was thrown 50 feet distant, demolishing a pattern shop, and damaging other buildings.

The explosion will cause much delay on machinery for Government steamers.

British Schooner Foam. PHOENIX, Mass., Wednesday, April 6, 1864. The British schooner Foam of Halifax, N. S., arrived here leaky and short of provisions.

## XXXVIII CONGRESS—First Session.

## SENATE—WASHINGTON, April 6, 1864.

## THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY.

Mr. CONNESS (Un., Cal.) offered the joint resolutions of the California Legislature endorsing the President's policy, which were ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

TRANSFER OF MEN FROM THE ARMY TO THE NAVY. Mr. (Un., Iowa) presented a bill repealing the joint resolution approved Feb. 22, 1864, authorizing the transfer of men from the army into the navy, which, after debate, was referred to the Naval Committee.

THE PROHIBITION OF SELLING FIRE-ARMS. The Senate then proceeded to the consideration of the joint resolution amending the Constitution.

Mr. HARLAN (Un., Iowa) said it was not proposed to exclude the States in Rebellion from the count in calculating the vote. There were now 35 States, and it was intended that three more would be introduced, making 38. Three-fourths of these would be 29. There were now 25 States represented in Congress, which, with the three new States, and Arkansas, Louisiana and Tennessee, would give us 31, more than a constitutional majority for the measure. Mr. Harlan controverted the argument that there was any real title in slave property, or that the institution itself could be justified by the history of the country. He said that the history of the country, as shown by the Constitution, was a history of the struggle to free the slave, and that the institution itself was a crime against God and man. He denied that slavery was a divine and, therefore, a desirable institution, as it abetted the conjugal relation. He said that the institution itself was a crime against God and man, and that the history of the country was a history of the struggle to free the slave.

Mr. SAUNDERS (Dem., Del.) said when proslavery became politicians, they could become proslavery. He denied the proposition that three-quarters of the States could do now what might have been done by the original framers of the Constitution. He believed that the nation would find a cause in which it could be united, and that any State that seceded, would be treated as a rebel. The Constitution was made by the States in their separate capacities, and was never submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection. It required State ratification, and it was not to be considered, but the instrument itself was to be regarded. The instrument itself alone showed how the great blessing of justice, tranquility, and liberty, which was conferred upon the people, was perverted. The power did not exist to submit these amendments to the people in the manner prescribed by the Constitution. He was a firm believer in the equality of the races. He would not attempt to explain a quarrel and a split in the Government, or a president over the destinies of men. He opposed this amendment, not because the people of his State were peculiarly interested in the institution, but from high convictions of duty to his country. He could not see how it could be a fourth of the States. The times were unpropitious; a time of war was not the time to change our organic law. The adoption of this measure would prolong the war beyond the lifetime of many members of the Senate.

Mr. (Un., N. H.) said he had supposed that there were no reasons which could induce him to make a speech under the present circumstances. Speeches were very apt to recoil upon their author, as he once learned to his cost. He said that he might as well stop and call for something to read, the only thing to be procured was an ancient newspaper containing one of his own speeches. [Laughter.]

Slavery died hard. When Charles I. was about to be beheaded, he said that he might as well fight, and he called for something to read, the only thing to be procured was an ancient newspaper containing one of his own speeches. [Laughter.]

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THE PROHIBITION OF SELLING FIRE-ARMS. The House then proceeded to the consideration of the joint resolution amending the Constitution.

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Mr. SAUNDERS (Dem., Del.) said when proslavery became politicians, they could become proslavery. He denied the proposition that three-quarters of the States could do now what might have been done by the original framers of the Constitution. He believed that the nation would find a cause in which it could be united, and that any State that seceded, would be treated as a rebel. The Constitution was made by the States in their separate capacities, and was never submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection. It required State ratification, and it was not to be considered, but the instrument itself was to be regarded. The instrument itself alone showed how the great blessing of justice, tranquility, and liberty, which was conferred upon the people, was perverted. The power did not exist to submit these amendments to the people in the manner prescribed by the Constitution. He was a firm believer in the equality of the races. He would not attempt to explain a quarrel and a split in the Government, or a president over the destinies of men. He opposed this amendment, not because the people of his State were peculiarly interested in the institution, but from high convictions of duty to his country. He could not see how it could be a fourth of the States. The times were unpropitious; a time of war was not the time to change our organic law. The adoption of this measure would prolong the war beyond the lifetime of many members of the House.

Mr. (Un., N. H.) said he had supposed that there were no reasons which could induce him to make a speech under the present circumstances. Speeches were very apt to recoil upon their author, as he once learned to his cost. He said that he might as well stop and call for something to read, the only thing to be procured was an ancient newspaper containing one of his own speeches. [Laughter.]

Slavery died hard. When Charles I. was about to be beheaded, he said that he might as well fight, and he called for something to read, the only thing to be procured was an ancient newspaper containing one of his own speeches. [Laughter.]

Mr. McDONALD (Dem., Cal.) said we were now in the third year of a terrible war, and hundreds of thousands of our friends and brethren had come down from the great battlefields quietly submitted. Was it too much to ask the Democratic party, like that Christian gentleman, to put their heads under the sword, and to what must inevitably come. [Laughter.]

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